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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

We acknowledge today, O Lord, Your power, mercy, and grace. We need Your power, for the challenges we face require more than human wisdom and strength. We need Your mercy, for we transgress Your law and fall short of Your glory. We need Your grace, for we cannot offer anything to merit Your favor or gain Your love.

Lord, empower our Senators for today's journey. Give them confidence to draw near to You that they may find grace to help them in this time of need. May they pass their days in the companionship of Your eternal presence. Enable them to learn the stewardship of time, energy, and abundance. And Lord, we continue to pray for Ukraine.

We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, July 12, 2022.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WARNOCK thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Ashish S. Vazirani, of Maryland, to be a Deputy Under Secretary of Defense.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. McCONNELL. We all know inflation and the economy are the biggest problems facing Americans today. The New York Times released a poll just yesterday showing a full 93 percent of

working-age Americans are dissatisfied with the state of our economy. We are a big and a diverse country. Ninety-three percent of Americans hardly ever agree on anything, but Democrats are unifying the country in unhappiness at the dark path down which they have taken our economy.

Monmouth University released some data explaining why Americans are feeling so sour. Forty-two percent of Americans are struggling to stay afloat financially at the highest rate ever—in this poll's entire history, even higher than the darkest days, the days of the COVID pandemic.

Sixty-three percent of Americans named economic issues as their chief concern. And they know who to blame for their misfortune: President Biden and congressional Democrats, who plowed \$2 trillion into our economy last year and created the highest inflation in four decades.

I am sure many of my colleagues heard heart-wrenching stories from constituents struggling with inflation during the past 2 weeks' State work period. I certainly did in Kentucky, where the average household now spends more than \$500 more a month than they did before President Biden took office.

At a meeting with homebuilders in Northern Kentucky, local employers told me their businesses were poised to slow down dramatically. For 2 years, they struggled as Washington Democrats' exacerbated supply chain hiccups and worker shortages with free-wheeling spending policies. Now, as the Fed tries to rein in inflation by hiking interest rates, home buyers have to contend with the most expensive borrowing environment in over a decade. Homebuilders foresee their industry literally stalling out.

In Paducah, I sat down with some of Western Kentucky's barge operators. Like the homebuilders, they are concerned with ongoing worker shortages, inflation, and of course spiraling fuel

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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